

137 of the lower zones between the plateau and the coast is the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*). Where these lower zones are well watered, especially along the streams, dense tropical forests are the rule.

(114) The Highland proper until quite recent times was well covered with a good variety of trees. This gave a pleasing aspect not lost upon travellers. Commander Cameron, who crossed from Zanzibar to Benguela in 1875, was greatly impressed by the rustic beauty of the country-side:

As we went forward the scenery increased in beauty, and at last I was constrained to halt and surrender myself to the enjoyment of the view which lay before me.

I will content myself with asserting that nothing could be more lovely than this entrancing scene, this glimpse of Paradise. To describe it would be impossible. Neither poet, . . . nor painter . . . could by pen or pencil do full justice to the country of Bailundu.

In the foreground were glades in the woodland, varied with knolls crowned by groves of large, English-looking trees, sheltering villages with yellow thatched roofs; . . . plantations with the fresh green of young crops and the bright red of newly hoed ground in vivid contrast, and running streams flashing in the sunlight; while in the far distance were mountains of endless and pleasing variety of form, gradually fading away until they blended with the blue of the sky. . . .

That evening we camped in a wood, a clear space having literally to be cut out of the masses of sweet-scented creepers which festooned the trees.¹

• (375) Some of this natural beauty still remains in Bailundu and other parts of the country, but much of it has gone, as grasslands have taken the place of forest and woodland. Native agriculture and the annual fires have caused much deforestation and much has also come about from the demands of European settlement and the needs of the railway, which up to the present time uses only wood for fuel. The question as to whether the rainfall has yet been much affected is often discussed.

164 The Benguela Highland is within the tropics and therefore subject to many tropical diseases. Malaria is prevalent owing to the presence of the *Anopheles* mosquito, one of the two essential hosts in the life-cycle of the malaria germ, man being the other. Infant mortality owing to malaria seems to be high among the Ovimbundu. It seems probable, however, that many of the

¹ V. L. Cameron, *Across Africa* (New York: Harpers, 1877), p. 410 f.